

Government Orders

tremendous importance of maintaining that presence. They pointed out that it would be a disaster if we pulled out and that it would result in an appalling bloodshed.

An example of the impact of our troops can, I think, be given by looking at an area in which Canadians and indeed the UN have been denied access. I am speaking of the area in the northwest part of Bosnia, known as Banja Luka.

I would commend to all members of this House an incredibly eloquent and moving letter which was sent to the editor of the *New York Times* about a week ago by a Canadian diplomat, Louis Gentile, who is on leave to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. He is working at great personal risk in Banja Luka. I want to just quote briefly from his letter. He states: "I wonder how many of your readers have seen Steven Spielberg's "Schindler's List" and how many have heard of Banja Luka—Bosnia in the heart of Europe". I know there was a showing just last week for parliamentarians of "Schindler's List".

Banja Luka is the second largest city in Bosnia. Canadian troops tried to get in there. They were at the border but the Bosnian-Serbs would not let them through. The mayor of Banja Luka took a bribe of about \$49,000, but flatly refused to allow any UN troops in.

Well what has happened in the absence of a United Nations presence there? Massacre, rape and concentration camps; Omarska, Manjaca, Turnpolje, tens of thousands of Muslims and Croats who could not escape the region. They have been stripped of all of their civil rights. They have been forced out of their homes and dismissed from work.

The writer talks of the terror of attacks by armed men at night, rape and murder, children unable to sleep, huddling in fear behind boarded up doors and windows. Fifty per cent of all of the Roman Catholic churches and diocese have been destroyed. Two of the most magnificent mosques in all of Europe and elsewhere have been burned down or blown up, including the 16th century Ferhad Pasha mosque.

● (1825)

That is the reality in an area in which the United Nations has not been present. That is a reality elsewhere as well, but at least we have been able to save some lives and bring some peace, some food and some medication.

That is genocide. Of course there is a convention that was signed after World War II, a convention on genocide whereby the nations of the world committed themselves to never again allow these atrocities that we have seen before in this century.

We saw it in Armenia in 1915. We saw it in the holocaust in World War II and we said collectively: "Never again". Yet in the very heart of Europe it is recurring. We cannot say we do not know about it. We see the horrors every day on our television

sets. We cannot deny the reality of mass rape, of torture, of execution, of concentration camps, of murder, of massive refugee movements, of ethnic cleansing.

I met with a representative of UNICEF, a Canadian. Canadians are doing such fine work in that region. This representative had prepared two reports for UNICEF on children and women in Bosnia-Herzegovina and children and women in the republic of Croatia. What is happening there is a horror story, an absolute horror story.

Other speakers have referred to the numbers from Sarajevo and we heard about the bombing of six Bosnian children by artillery shells. Such courage. Lobbing artillery from 30 kilometres away in the hills outside Sarajevo takes great courage, does it not? Killing innocent children there, innocent Croatian children in Mostar. The siege goes on.

I witnessed firsthand the horrors of this war in eastern Croatia. I travelled to Vukovar, a city which has been destroyed, a formerly beautiful city on the banks of the Danube reduced to rubble, almost everything destroyed, markets, homes. I visited a Catholic church and walked through the rubble. I saw the photographs of children. I saw the broken down statue of the Virgin Mary, the crosses, totally destroyed.

From there I went to a mass grave site in a little village just outside Vukovar. In a garbage dump over 200 bodies were buried. The United Nations War Crimes Tribunal has been trying to investigate but the Bosnian Serbs have told them they cannot do that. It is appalling.

The question we must address and that I will address in the few minutes remaining is in response to these horrors, to this human tragedy, what should Canada do and what should the United Nations do.

Clearly the most desirable solution is a diplomatic solution. God knows we have tried that so many times. We have gotten so close, gotten to the point where Karadzic, on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs has said that yes, they would accept the solution, that it would be taken back to the Bosnian-Serb parliament. What do they do? They say to forget it. "We have 70 per cent of the territory even though we are only about a third of the population and we want to keep that territory and we will use force if we have to".

I am not hopeful about the possibility of a diplomatic solution in the absence of stronger and more effective United Nations action. We have seen the ethnic cleansing. We have heard the many threats that have been made. There can be nothing worse than bluffing.

In fact when Karadzic went back to his parliament in May 1993 before they voted he said that either they accept this plan or they can expect fierce attacks by NATO forces. His information minister said no, that they were only bluffing and that they could continue. Too often that has been the history: to bluff.